

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## Christianity a Religion of Service

It is one of the peculiarities of Christianity that it is a religion of service. The idea of service as inseparably connected with the religion of Jesus Christ is not made sufficiently prominent in Christian teaching and preaching. The great demand of the church today is for more practical service, real service in the interests of humanity. It is a lamentable fact that the great majority of Christian professors have no true conception of the meaning of service. To be a regular attendant at the appointed time and place of worship, to join with your brethren in song and praise and prayer, this seems to be the ordinary church member's highest conception of Christian service. Yet this is not service at all, it is worship. To be a servant of the Master means infinitely more than attending devoutly upon the means of grace in the house of God, reading the Word, joining in prayer and pleasant song, listening to an interesting sermon, or even relating marvelous religious experiences and rising to the highest summit in ecstatic devotions. Service is labor done in the interests of and for another; Christian service is labor done in the interests of and for humanity, and such service cannot be performed in the sanctuary; it must be done out in the cold world where the Christian comes in contact with the real needs of humanity. Divine worship in the sanctuary is but a means to prepare the soul for higher and more efficient service during the six days that intervene between the Sabbaths. The Apostle Peter experienced an extraordinary elevation of spirit on the Mount of Transfiguration, when his soul, unconscious of its earthly surroundings, was completely enraptured in its heavenly contemplation; so overpowering were his emotions that he expressed a desire to continue permanently in his ecstatic joys and bliss. The Apostle could afterwards tell of his wonderful experience on the Mount, but that was not service. That marvelous experience on the Mount was but a preparation for real service, the service that was awaiting him at the foot of the Mount where his poor brethren were groping in darkness, grappling with difficulties, meeting obstacles which they could not surmount. The opportunity for service

was not on the summit of the hill amid the sweet delights of communion and fellowship with the transfigured Christ, but at the foot of the Mount as it always is, down in the valley among poor helpless humanity. It was there where Peter could be of real service to his Master by doing something for his fellowmen.

As an example of true service we turn to Christ's own life. He announced himself as one that serves. He came not to be ministered to, but to minister. He was among us as a servant. And what a blessed ministry it was. He went about doing good, helping the poor, encouraging the helpless, comforting the dying, healing the sick, pouring the oil of gladness and joy into the wounds of broken hearts, hearts made sore by the wearsome toils of life, everywhere lifting up and helping fallen humanity—this was service, real service, the service to which Christ invites us and which in the end brings its own reward. Dr. Strong says: "I know of no way to serve God except to help him do what he is trying to do in the world—namely to lift this poor, blundering, sorrowing, sinning race up into his light and joy and purity." Here is the secret of it all. To do something for humanity in the name of Jesus and for his sake, this is serving God. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me," will not be said of those whose religious life consists wholly in mere emotions, in singing hymns, and making long and loud prayers, but rather of those who have given their life to the service of humanity, who have gone into the sick room and ministered to the needs of the afflicted, who have clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and inspired men and women to higher, nobler and purer lives. Of these the blessed Master will say when he comes to make up his jewels, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy rest." Not those who write charmingly about the beauty of a life of service; not those who discourse eloquently on the Christlikeness of the altruistic spirit, but rather those who are *living* the life of service and daily manifesting the altruistic spirit, will merit the welcome plaudit, "Well done." Not the nice things you have *written*, not the beautiful things you have *said*, but the nice and the beautiful things you have *done* in the name of Christ and suffering humanity, will be the basis of judgment in the last day and every day. Jesus says: "Inasmuch as ye (not said or wrote) *did* it."